

The Journal.

Walter & Deininger, Proprietors

B. O. Deininger, Associate Editor

Milheim, Thursday May 30,

Terms—\$1.50 Per Annum.

"Can you do nothing with the boy?" she said, with tears coming to her eyes. "He is all I have. His father is dead. I hope to give him a classical course, and to see him in some profession."

"I will do all I can," promised Mr. Nagle. But his heart sank within him.

"Leaving Mrs. Steele, he went down the village street. A crowd had collected about a trench which had been dug for some purpose. The doctor's horse had fallen into it, and was struggling desperately to get out, the shoveling yellow clay giving him an uncertain foothold.

Some of the men had beat him cruelly and some were trying to urge him by dragging at the reins. All the others were looking on solemnly, with their hands in their pockets. Just then Mr. Nagle heard a clear, authoritative voice.

"Help me bring these planks and put them in the trench!"

Surely that was John's voice.

To his surprise, the men listened to him. "What's yer idee, John?"

"The horse can help himself better than all of you can drag him, only give him a solid footing."

In five minutes the poor beast had struggled out, with the help of two or three planks.

He limped as he was led off. No body noticed this but John.

"Stop a moment," he cried, and lifting the horse's foot, he picked out a stone from it, with a little tool which he took from his pocket; for John's pocket was filled with little tools and queer, tiny mechanical contrivances.

It was Mr. Pigeon's last day in the academy. He had been appointed to a professorship in a college, and the new teacher, Mr. Nagle, had arrived to take his place. Mr. Pigeon, in fact, was inaugurating him in his office.

"Here is the roll of names," he said. "I have added a remark to each which may give you a hint of the character of the boys. You will find it useful."

Mr. Nagle looked over it.

"John Steele—which is John Steele?" he asked.

"The loutish, red-haired lad at the end of the bench. You'll observe the vacancy in his face."

Now opposite John Steele's name was written, "The good-for-nothing."

"As the boys changed class, Mr. Pigeon whispered, "I am almost forced to believe that that boy's mind is impenetrable,—so far as knowledge goes."

Mr. Nagle paid more attention to John Steele than to any other boy that afternoon. It was undeniably a bad case. He was in the first page of the Latin grammar, while other boys of his age were reading Virgil.

John stumbled over the first declension, breaking down invariably in the vocative. He bounded frantically from the deck to the bottom of the river. There was a frantic struggle for life. Then the portion of the wreck he was on floated down stream.

About a dozen passengers of the crew clung to it. The night fell fast. The shore was but a fast-receding dark line, with red twinkling lights.

Upon the shattered deck cabin hung a single life-preserver. John saw it, climbed like a cat to where it was, and brought it down.

"Give me that!" shrieked Clarence. "Oh, give it to me! I can't swim!"

"It's for this woman."

There was but one woman among them, and she was old and lame.

"Give it to me, I say? Help, help! We're drowning!"

He seized the life-preserver. John quietly took it from him, and buttoned it about the old woman's waist.

Then he began to drag out one or two buoys and boxes that were in the cabin.

Mr. Nagle noticed how cool and alert the boy was, in spite of his deadly paleness and trembling.

"We had better take ourselves to these," he said. "This deck is so shattered it will go to pieces before they see us from shore."

Mr. Nagle, without a word, followed his advice. John was a Latinist and no poet, but he had one quality which made him leader just then.

A few moments later, the deck broke up, and Mr. Nagle found himself in the rushing current, but was picked up by one of the boats which were out in search of the victims.

The banks were lined with pale, terrified faces. As he was hauled on shore, he saw a boy dragged out of the water, and a poor little woman in black dyed to him with a wild cry.

"I'm all—alright, mother," gasped John; and then he cried on her breast like the child that he was.

"Why didn't he build somethin'—some thin' that wouldn't wash away?"

Mr. Nagle smiled, and looked at the boy, puzzled. He managed to talk to most of the boys separately during recess, and among the rest to John.

"I am sorry to see you so low in your class, John."

"I'm always there," promptly.

"Mostly foot."

"We must try and bring you up—cheerfully.

"You can't do it sir,"—looking him straight in the eye, and speaking with a ready decision that startled the teacher. "I study more than any boy here. But I can't learn. I'm of no account, Mr. Pigeon says."

Mr. Nagle was very patient with John. But after a few weeks, he, too, began to despair. The boy seemed to have absolutely no memory for words, and very little for ideas. If a rule in arithmetic, or a fact in history was hammered into his head to-day, by to-morrow it was sure to be gone. As far as his poor brain was concerned, it certainly seemed as if nature preferred a vacuum.

One day John's mother called on Mr. Nagle. She was a little anxious woman, dressed in deep mourning, and taking snuff violently.

"I did that, sir. There is the money for it. Will it be enough?"

"Oh, you did it, eh?" scowling at him. "Well, give me the money. What are you eternally prying into my press for, anyhow?"

"I will do all I can," promised Mr. Nagle. But his heart sank within him.

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"Leaving Mrs. Steele, he went down the village street. A crowd had collected about a trench which had been dug for some purpose.

The o'd man talked to John awhile. That evening he called on Mrs. Steele, and sent up his card. "Peter Copley, Machinist."

"I've had my eyes on your boy," he said, abruptly, "for some time. Noticed him the night of the explosion. I'd like to take him with me and teach him my trade. He has a sound, practical head, that boy."

Mrs. Steele accepted the offer, and went with her boy.

"The Good-For-Nothing."

"Yes, I think I may say without boasting that this is the model school of the State, and Clarence Tracy is its model scholar."

Mr. Pigeon, as he spoke, glanced at a slight, tall boy, at the head of the class.

"Always first. Recites page after page without the break of a syllable. Obedient, gentlemanly! In short, sir, if you discover a fault in that boy, you must have keener eyes than mine."

Frank Leslie's "JOURNAL OF FAMOUS LIVES" is a weekly publication containing excellent illustrations and full descriptions of the lives of famous persons, both living and dead, from the earliest times to the present day. It is published weekly, and contains 16 pages of illustrations and 16 pages of text. Price 10c per copy.

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